



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913
PH (517) 373.7350 | FAX (517) 373.9228
www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/patterson/

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CONTACT: Christopher Kelley
(517) 373-0051

Somebody's Watching You... Who're You Going to Call?

Lansing - Do you want to know who your neighbor is calling on the cell phone? Do you really trust your boyfriend's claims about the frequent calls on his cell phone? How about your boss? Want to find out for sure?

Several companies claim to offer such services, though none seems affiliated with any major cellular telephone or VOIP service (voice over Internet protocol) providers.

Today, Senator Bruce Patterson, Chairman of the Senate Technology and Energy Committee, said he was going to convene hearings on this issue and introduce legislation if needed.

"This appears to be a growing problem around the country," said Patterson, R-Canton.

Reports suggest that in some cases, telephone company insiders secretly sell customers' phone-call lists to online brokers, despite strict telephone company rules against such deals. Companies offering such services found on the Internet sell this information for about \$90.

"The public is concerned about identity theft. The Michigan Legislature has already acted to provide such protections to consumers. This seems like the next logical step. People value their privacy," said Patterson.

As chairman, Patterson has guided legislation to combat spyware and SPAM through the committee.

Patterson said hearings could begin as early as next week.

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